

Unit 7: Criminality and Paramilitaries in Communities



Lesson 1: Why do paramilitaries still exist?

This lesson relates to why paramilitaries are still in existence today after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. It requires pupils to think about the impact that paramilitaries are having in our communities and come up with recommendations to help tackle paramilitary activity.

Planning

Prior Learning	Pupils should have gained prior knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• what justice is;• what lawfulness is; and• what the Northern Ireland justice system is.
Learning Outcomes	Pupils will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• demonstrate understanding of why paramilitary groups still exist in our communities; and• demonstrate understanding of how they can affect change in society.
Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Focus	Pupils will have opportunities to develop the following: Working with Others <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect the views and opinions of others and reach agreements using negotiation and compromise Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make and justify decisions• Offer solutions and weigh up options• Examine options and weigh up pros and cons.
Attitudes and Dispositions	Pupils will be encouraged to develop the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect• Concern for others

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Active Citizenship



Resources

Animation: *Criminality and Paramilitaries in Communities*

Unit 7: Lesson 1 Resource A – Group discussion

Unit 7: Lesson 1 Resource B – Opinions about why paramilitary groups still exist

Unit 7: Lesson 1 Resource C – Your views

Channel 4 news clip:

[‘The paramilitaries who live on in Northern Ireland’](#)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=007TDWbv4zk

Suggested teaching and learning strategies

Launch

Lead a class discussion, using prompt questions and effective questioning techniques:

1. What is criminality?
2. What are paramilitaries?
3. What is a ceasefire?

You may now wish to show the animation *Criminality and Paramilitaries in Communities*.

Possible answers and discussion points:

1. People committing crimes; people not following the law; any behaviour that is against the law
2. Groups in society who threaten citizens; organisations based in Northern Ireland that work like gangs; people who believe they are fighting for a cause; a group that acts like an army
3. When two countries come to an agreement to end war; when two sides agree to stop fighting

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Active Citizenship



Activities

Activity 1: Why do paramilitary groups still exist after the Good Friday Agreement?

- Split the class into groups of three or four, and hand out copies of **Resource A**.
- Give the groups five minutes to come up with as many reasons as they can and note these on the page.
- Ask each group to feed back their answers, and facilitate a whole-class discussion.
- Write their ideas on a board or flip chart, as this will help with Activity 3.

Possible answers and discussion points:

Poverty, criminality, control, gang activity

Activity 2: Possible reasons why paramilitaries still exist

- Watch the Channel 4 news video clip '[The paramilitaries who live on in Northern Ireland](#)', available on www.youtube.com
- Provide copies of **Resource B**. In their groups, the pupils should write down reasons why three main groups – police, loyalists and republicans – say paramilitaries are still in place.
- Add their answers to those you wrote on the board or a flip chart in Activity 1.
- The clip focuses more on loyalist groups. Discuss with the class whether they think any of the reasons given would apply to both loyalists and republicans.

Possible answers and discussion points:

Police

- Motivators are greed and power
- Involved in extortion, drug dealing and control

Loyalists

- See themselves as beyond crime and do not view themselves as paramilitaries
- See themselves as working to provide welfare and community action groups
- Others say they are still there because there are still republican groups, so they need counter groups
- Some view them as protection and keeping the people right

Republicans

- Formed to counter British occupation in Ireland and to fight for a socialist republic

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Activity 3: Your views

- This task encourages pupils to identify ways in which they can be active in bringing about change in Northern Ireland. Read out the following:

'Northern Ireland cannot be truly at peace until the paramilitary groups within our communities are no longer in existence. There is obviously no quick fix to dealing with paramilitaries in our community. Young people in our communities are the future for Northern Ireland.'

- Facilitate a class discussion on whether or not the pupils agree.
- In their groups and using **Resource C**, ask them to come up with three measures they would recommend to local politicians to help tackle paramilitary activity and bring it to an end in Northern Ireland. Encourage them to refer back to their answers from the previous activities for ideas.
- Ask the pupils to be prepared to explain why they think each measure would be useful.

Possible answers and discussion points:

- *Impose tougher prison sentences on those known to carry out punishment-style attacks.*
- *Invest more money into policing in Northern Ireland specifically to tackle paramilitary activity.*
- *Create new programmes to improve employment rates in the most deprived areas at highest risk of paramilitary activity.*
- *Invest in youth groups.*

Debrief

Discuss the following:

- 1. Do you think Northern Ireland can be a peaceful country while paramilitaries exist?**
- 2. How do you think as young people you can really effect change in Northern Ireland?**

Possible answers and discussion points:

- 1. For the majority of people in Northern Ireland it has been peaceful since the Good Friday Agreement.

The paramilitaries need to be completely removed for Northern Ireland to be truly peaceful.*
- 2. (Pupils' own opinions, drawing on what they have learned in the lesson)*

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Unit 7: Lesson 1 Resource A Group discussion

**Why do
paramilitary
groups still
exist after the
Good Friday
Agreement?**

Criminality and Paramilitaries in Communities



Unit 7: Lesson 1 Resource B

Opinions about why paramilitary groups still exist



Police

Loyalists



Republicans

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Unit 7: Lesson 1 Resource C Your views

Why do you think this measure would be effective?			
Measure			